The Proskomede[1]

The priest who desires to celebrate the Divine Mysteries must first be at peace with all, have nothing against anyone, and insofar as is within his power, keep his heart from evil thoughts, be continent from the evening before, and be vigilant until the time of divine service. When the time is come, he goes into the temple, in company with the deacon, and together they make three reverences toward the east before the holy doors.

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The Entry Prayers

Deacon: Bless, Master.

Priest: Blessed is our God, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Deacon: Amen.

O Heavenly King, O Comforter, Spirit of Truth, Who art everywhere present and fillest all things, Treasury of good things and Giver of life: Come and dwell in us, and cleanse us of all impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. *Thrice.*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, blot out our sins. O Master, pardon our iniquities. O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. *Thrice.*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, Who art in the heavens, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Priest: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory: of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Deacon: Amen.

Then they say:

Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us; for, at a loss for any defense, this prayer do we sinners offer unto Thee as Master, have mercy on us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Lord, have mercy on us; for we have hoped in Thee, be not angry with us greatly, neither remember our iniquities; but look upon us now as thou art compassionate, and deliver us from our enemies; for Thou art our God, and we, Thy people; all are the works of Thy hands, and we call upon Thy name.

Both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

The door of compassion open unto us, O blessed Theotokos, for hoping in thee, let us not perish; through thee may we be delivered from adversities; for thou art the salvation of the Christian race.

Then they approach the icon of Christ and kiss it, saying:

We worship Thine immaculate Icon, O Good One, asking the forgiveness of our failings, O Christ God; for of Thine Own will Thou wast well-pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh, that thou mightest deliver from slavery to the enemy those whom Thou hadst fashioned. Wherefore, we cry to Thee thankfully: Thou didst fill all things with joy, O our Savior, when Thou camest to save the world.[2]

Then they kiss the icon of the Theotokos, saying the Troparion:

As thou art a well-spring of compassion, vouchsafe mercy unto us, O Theotokos. Look upon a sinful people; show forth, as always thy power. For hoping in thee we cry "Rejoice!" to thee, as once did Gabriel, the Supreme Commander of the Bodiless Hosts.

Then with bowed head the priest says:

Priest: O Lord, stretch forth Thy hand from Thy holy place on high, and strengthen me for this, Thine appointed service; that standing uncondemned before Thy dread altar, I may celebrate the bloodless ministry. For Thine is the power and the glory unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Then they make a bow to each choir, and go into the prothesis, saying:

I shall go into Thy house; I shall worship toward Thy holy temple in fear of Thee. O Lord, guide me in the way of Thy righteousness; because of mine enemies, make straight my way before Thee. For in their mouth there is no truth; their heart is vain. Their throat is an open sepulcher, with their tongues have they spoken deceitfully; judge them, O God. Let them fall down on account of their own devising; according to the multitude of their ungodliness, cast them out, for they have embittered Thee, O Lord. And let all them be glad that hope in Thee; they shall ever rejoice, and Thou shalt dwell among them. And all shall glory in Thee that love Thy name, for Thou shalt bless the righteous. O Lord, as with a shield of Thy good pleasure hast Thou crowned us.[3]

Additional Prayers of Preparation

Priest's prayer before serving. St John of Kronstadt

(Note: All these "Additional Prayers of Preparation" are not in the official service book for the church. Some priest say them as part of their preparation for serving the liturgy)

Lord, many of these who stand in Thy Temple, stand before Thee with their souls idle, like empty vessels, and knowest not what to pray for as they ought.

At this favorable time, in this day of salvation, fill their hearts with the Grace of Thy Holy and Life-giving Spirit, and at my prayer give them to my love, as full vessels, filled with the knowledge of Thy goodness and with heartfelt contrition and devotion.

Give to them Thy Holy Spirit, who intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words.

I myself, their pastor, am sinful and impure above all men, but consider not my sins, dismiss them according to Thy great mercy and hear my prayer at this hour for the sake of the grace of the priesthood resting on me and dwelling in me.

Amen.

http://www.orthodox.net/trebnic/of-john-of-kronstadt-before-serving.doc

http://www.orthodox.net/trebnic/of-john-of-kronstadt-before-serving.pdf

http://www.orthodox.net/trebnic/of-john-of-kronstadt-before-serving.html

Prayer of A Priest - Blessed Papa Dimitri Gagastathis

(1902 - 1975)

O Jesus, the good Shepherd, I thank Thee, because Thou hast given even to me, the small and weak one, the same command that Thou didst give to Thy apostles, when Thou didst tell them "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep".

Never would I dare, O Lord, to accept such a heavy mission, if I did not believe that Thy grace remedies what is weak and makes up for what is wanting.

Therefore, in this moment, in which I feel my shortcomings so intensely, I, Thy priest, Thy sacrificer, the small shepherd of Thy flock, implore Thee:

Uphold me, O Lord, keep my heart pure, whole, free from money and attached to Thy commandments.

Take away from Thy servant selfishness, ostentation and worldliness.

Keep him from anger, rancor, envy and jealousy, *fear, procrastination, laziness, anxiety, fatigue, cynicism, isolationism, judging, negative thoughts, torpor, listlessness, undue regret, ignorance, stony insensibility*

Make me a man of prayer, so that not only with my lips, but also with my heart I may praise and glorify Thy Holy Name.

Help me not forget the holy feelings of my first Divine Liturgy, and by them to chase away the germ of habit, which every so often comes into me.

Help Thy priest, O Lord be always:

an angel of comfort for the afflicted
, a source of spiritual invigoration for the disheartened
, *a means of healing for the afflicted*
, *a source of strength for the addicted*
, *a source of purpose for the confused*

, a guide towards Thy peace
, and a source of joy for the wounded.

Help me, my Savior combine in my life and work:

tenderness with firmness
, tact with strength
, sensitivity with strictness
, *courage with discernment.*

Reduce my faults, so that no one may fall because of my weakness.

Teach me, Lord:

how to instruct the children
, inspire the youth
, advise the adults
, turn back the sinners
, encourage those who are about to die.

Teach me, O Lord who knowest the hearts of men, how to perform the Mysteries of Thy Church and especially the Mystery of Holy Confession. During that time, make me be a perfect physician and an affectionate father.

Help me in my parish an inspiration of good works and a leader in God pleasing endeavors, so that all may be won over for their own happiness and for the glory of Thy Name. Amen.

Italics are additions to Papa Dimitri's prayer. Take them out if you want the original prayer.

http://www.orthodox.net/trebnic/of-papa-dimitri-gagastathis.doc
http://www.orthodox.net/trebnic/of-papa-dimitri-gagastathis.pdf

Prayer for Those Preparing to Celebrate The Divine Mysteries

Saint Ambrose Bishop of Mediolansus (Milan)

O Lord Jesus Christ, Who art the true High Priest and Bishop of our souls: Who didst upon the Altar of the Cross offer Thyself to God the Father to be a pure and undefiled sacrifice for us miserable sinners, Who hast likewise given us Thy Flesh to eat and Thy Blood to drink: and hast established this Mystery in the power of the Holy Spirit, saying, Do this in remembrance of me:

I beseech Thee by the same Thy precious Blood, the ransom of our salvation.

I beseech Thee by that wondrous and ineffable love wherewith Thou dost vouchsafe to love us (miserable and unworthy sinners) washing us clean from all our sins in Thine own Blood.

Teach me, Thy unworthy servant, whom among Thy manifold mercies Thou hast vouchsafed to share in the benefits of Thy Priesthood. (And this through no merits of my own, but only of Thine abundant mercy!)

Teach me, I pray Thee, by Thy Holy Spirit to draw near to so great a Mystery, as is meet and right, with reverence and honor, and in all godliness and holy fear.

Make me by Thy grace always so to believe and understand, to feel and firmly to hold, to speak, and to think, concerning this holy Mystery as shall be well-pleasing to Thee and profitable to my soul.

Let Thy good Spirit enter into my heart, that with voiceless utterance and without sound of words He may speak there, all Thy truth, which same, hidden under the veil of holiness, passeth man's understanding.

Of Thy great mercy vouchsafe to me to take part in this holy Mystery with purity of heart and integrity of mind.

Deliver me with the gracious and unfailing guard of Thy blessed Angels, that by their mighty protection the enemies of good may be banished thence.

By the power of this great Mystery and by the hand of that holy Angel whom Thou dost send me, drive far from me and from all Thy servants the spirit of hardness of heart, the spirit of pride and vainglory, the spirit of envy and blasphemy, the spirit of fornication and uncleanness, the spirit of doubt and unfaithfulness. Confound them that persecute us, destroy them that make haste to destroy us.

O King of virgins, Lover of chastity and purity; pour on me the heavenly dew of Thy blessing, to quench in my flesh any smoldering embers of lustful desires, that I may abide in continual chastity both of body and soul.

Mortify in my members all incentives of the flesh, all inordinate affections, all motions of concupiscence. And give unto me true and abiding chastity, and all other gifts which be pleasing to Thee. Grant me thus to offer unto Thee this Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving in purity of body and cleanness of heart.

For who can understand what a sorrow of heart and what a fountain of tears is needful! What reverence and fear, what chastity of body and purity of heart is required!

And yet only thus should one draw near to assist at that divine and heavenly Sacrifice. For herein Thy Flesh is eaten indeed and Thy Blood is drunk indeed. For herein things beneath and things above, things earthly and things heavenly, are made one. For herein are Thy holy Angels ever present. For herein in a wonderful and ineffable order Thou hast constituted Thyself to be both Sacrifice and Priest.

Who can be worthy to offer this Sacrifice unless Thou, Almighty God, dost make him worthily so to do!

I know, O Lord, and know of a surety, and to Thy goodness do I confess the same, that I am not worthy to draw near to so great a Mystery, because of my grievous sins and my manifold negligence.

But I know, and truly believe with all my heart, and confess with my mouth, that Thou canst make me worthily so to do, Who alone canst justify and sanctify sinners.

O my God, I pray Thee, by this Thy almighty power, that Thou wouldest vouchsafe to me a sinner worthily to take my part in this Sacrifice.

And thereto endue me with fear and trembling, with purity of heart and a fountain of tears, with spiritual gladness and heavenly rejoicing.

Grant that my soul may feel the sweetness of Thy blessed Presence, and the guard of Thy holy Angels round about me.

For I, O Lord, having in devout remembrance Thy holy passion, draw near unto Thy Altar. Although a sinner, I draw near in the Sacrifice which Thou didst institute , and which Thou hast commanded us to offer unto Thee in Thy memory and for our salvation.

I beseech Thee, Almighty God, that Thou wouldest receive the same for the benefit of Thy holy Church, and the people which Thou hast purchased with Thine own Blood.

And forasmuch as Thou dost vouch safe to place Thy Priesthood upon sinful men; and to give each Priest as a mediator between Thee and the same Thy people: I pray Thee that wherever Thou findest not the testimony of good works in them; yet Thou wouldest not make void the office and ministry which Thou hast committed unto their charge: that the Price of their Redemption, for whom Thou hast vouchsafed to offer Thyself to be a perfect Oblation and Satisfaction, be not lost through any of our unworthiness.

And moreover, O Lord, I lift up before Thee (if Thou wilt vouchsafe to look favorably thereon):

the tribulations of all peoples and the perils of all nations;
the sighing of all prisoners and the sorrows of the fatherless;
the necessities of them that travel,
the wants of the sick,

the depression of the weary;
the failing powers of all the aged,
the aspirations of all young men,
the resolutions of all maidens,
and the lamentations of all widows.

For Thou, O Lord, hast mercy upon all men and hatest nothing that Thou hast made.

Remember how frail is our nature, for Thou art our Father, for Thou art our God. Be not angry with us as we have deserved, and withdraw not Thou Thy mercy from us. For we do not present our supplications before Thee because we are righteous, but rather because Thou art compassionate.

Take away from us our iniquities, and in Thy mercy kindle in us the fire of Thy Holy Spirit.

Take away the stony heart from us, and give us a heart of flesh; that we may love Thee, cherish Thee, delight in Thee, follow Thee, and enjoy Thee.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, of Thy mercy, to show the light of Thy countenance upon Thy family performing this sacred office, to the honor of Thy Name. And to the intent that their supplications be not in vain, nor their petitions of none effect, do Thou put into our minds such prayers as it shall be well-pleasing unto Thee to hear and to fulfill.

We pray Thee also, O Lord, holy Father, for the souls of the faithful departed: that this most comfortable Sacrament may be to them salvation, health, rejoicing, and refreshment. O Lord my God, grant unto them this day to feast abundantly on

Thee, the Living Bread; Who didst come down from heaven, and givest life unto the world.

Grant them to eat Thy Flesh, holy and blessed, Who art the immaculate Lamb that takest away the sins of the world; even the Flesh which Thou didst take of the womb, holy and glorious, of the blessed Virgin Mary, by the operation of the Holy Spirit. Grant them to drink of that fountain of love which flowed from Thy sacred side, pierced by the soldier's spear that being thereby refreshed and satisfied, restored and comforted, they may rejoice in giving praise and glory unto Thee.

I pray Thee, O Lord, of Thy mercy, that Thou wouldest send upon the bread now to be offered unto Thee, the fullness of Thy blessing and the sanctifying powers of Thy Godhead. Send down also, O Lord, the unseen and incomprehensible majesty of Thy Holy Spirit, as once Thou didst send the same upon the sacrifice of the fathers: that he may make our oblations to be indeed Thy Body and Blood

And because I am so unworthy, teach me to approach this holy Mystery with purity of heart and with a devout sorrow for my sins, in reverence and in awe. So shalt Thou lovingly and graciously accept this Sacrifice at my hands for the salvation of all men, both living and departed.

I beseech Thee also, O Lord, by this same sacred Mystery of Thy Body and Blood whereby, in Thy holy Church, we are daily given to eat and drink; are washed and sanctified, and made partakers in Thy one Almighty Godhead; grant to me Thy holy virtues, that being filled therewith, I may draw near unto Thine Altar

with a good conscience; that so this heavenly Sacrament may be unto me life and salvation.

For Thou, Who art ever holy and blessed, hast said: The Bread which I will give is my Flesh for the life of the world: I am the living Bread which came down from heaven: If any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever.

O Bread of Sweetness, give healing to my taste, that I may perceive the delights of Thy love. Deliver me from mine earthiness that I may find no sweetness in anything apart from Thee.

O Bread of purest whiteness, that containest all delights, and all pleasant savors!

O Thou Who dost ever refresh us, and never failest! Grant that my heart may feed on Thee, and that my inmost soul may be filled with the sweetness of Thy savor.

The Angels do feed upon Thee with full mouth.

Grant that I, a pilgrim and a sojourner, may feed on Thee in such measure as I may.

And thereby grant that I fail not in my journey, with such provision to stay me.

O Bread, holy, pure, and living, Who didst come down from heaven and givest life unto the world!

Come into my heart, and cleanse me from all defilement both of flesh and of spirit.

Enter into my person, and heal and cleanse me both inwardly and outwardly.

Be the protection and abiding health of my body as well as of my soul.

Drive far from me all the enemies that lie in wait for me.

Grant that they may fly far off from the presence of Thy power.

Grant that being in all things defended by Thee, I may walk in a straight way into Thy Kingdom.

For there we shall no more behold Thee in a mystery as in this present time. But rather we shall see Thee face to face, when Thou shalt deliver up the kingdom to God the Father, and God shall be all in all.

For on that day shalt Thou satisfy me with a wondrous fullness, so that I shall no more hunger or thirst for ever, O Jesus. Who with the same God the Father and the Holy Spirit livest and reignest, world without end.

Amen.

This prayer is at:

http://www.orthodox.net/trebnic/of-ambrose-before-celebrating-mysteries.html

http://www.orthodox.net/trebnic/of-ambrose-before-celebrating-mysteries.html

http://www.orthodox.net/trebnic/of-ambrose-before-celebrating-mysteries.doc

Compassionate and merciful, long-suffering, most merciful and true Lord, look down from Thy holy dwelling-place, hearken to us, Thy suppliants, and deliver us from every trial and temptation, both diabolic and human.

Do not deprive us of Thy help, nor bring upon us heavier chastisement than we are able to bear.

For we are not capable of conquering what opposes us, while Thou, O Lord, hast power to save us from all adversities.

Save us, O God, from the difficulties of this world in accordance with Thy goodness, so that, having entered Thy holy altar with a pure conscience, we may, without condemnation, offer Thee with the heavenly Powers the blessed and thrice-holy hymn, and having accomplished the divine ministry that is well-pleasing to Thee, we may be found worthy of eternal life.

Defiled as I am by many sins, do not utterly reject me, Master, Lord, our God. For see, I draw near to this divine and heavenly mystery, not as though I were worthy, but, looking to Thy goodness, I raise my voice to Thee, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner.' For I have sinned against heaven and before Thee, and I am not worthy to lift up my eyes to this Thy sacred and spiritual Table, on which Thy only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, is mystically set forth as a sacrifice by me, a sinner stained by every defilement. Therefore I bring Thee this supplication, that Thy Spirit, the Advocate, may be sent down to me, strengthening and preparing me for this ministry. And grant that without condemnation the word that has been declared by Thee may be proclaimed by me to the people in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom Thou art blessed, together with Thine all-holy, good, life-giving and consubstantial Spirit, now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Almighty God, Lord, whose name is great, who givest us entrance to the Holy of Holies through the coming of Thy only-begotten Son, our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ, we entreat and implore Thy goodness. Since we are full of fear and trembling as we are about to stand before Thy holy altar, send forth Thy good grace upon us, sanctify our souls, bodies and spirits and change our thoughts to true devotion, so that, with a pure conscience, we may offer Thee gifts, presents, fruits, for the removal of our sins, for the forgiveness of all Thy people, by the grace and love for humankind of Thine only-begotten Son, with whom Thou art blessed, together with Thine all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Master and Lord, who visits us in

mercy and compassion and hast granted us, humble sinners and Thy unworthy servants the grace to stand at Thy holy Altar and to offer to Thee this dread sacrifice without shedding of blood for our own sins and those committed in ignorance by the people, look on me, Thy unprofitable servant and wipe away my transgressions through Thy compassion and purify my lips and my heart from every defilement of flesh and spirit, and banish from me every base and unseemly thought, and enable me for this ministry by the power of Thy all-holy Spirit, and accept me through Thy goodness as I approach Thy holy altar, and be well pleased, Lord, for these gifts to be acceptable that are offered through our hands, being gracious to my weaknesses, and do not cast me away from Thy presence.

Do not despise my unworthiness, but have mercy on me, O God, in accordance with Thy great mercy and according to the abundance of Thy compassion disregard my offences, so that, coming into the presence of Thy glory with condemnation, I may be found worthy of the protection of Thy only-begotten Son and the illumination of Thy all-holy Spirit, but as Thy servant may I find grace, mercy and forgiveness of sins both in this present age and in the age to come. Yes, Master almighty and all-powerful, listen to my supplication and grant me reprieve from my evil deeds, for it is Thou who workest all in all, and in all things we seek from Thee Thy help and assistance and that of Thy only-begotten Son and Thy good, life-giving and consubstantial Spirit, now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

http://www.orthodox.net/services/prayers-b4-liturgy.html

From the Liturgy of St James, http://web.ukonline.co.uk/ephrem/lit-james.htm

The Vesting

Having come into the sanctuary, they make three bows before the Holy Table and kiss the Holy Gospel and the Holy Table. Then each one takes his sticharion in his hands, and they make three reverences toward the east, while saying to themselves with each:

O God, cleanse me a sinner and have mercy on me.

The Vesting of the Deacon

Then the deacon comes to the priest, holding in his right hand the sticharion with the orarion, and bowing his head before the priest, says:

Deacon: **Bless, Master, the sticharion with the orarion.**

Priest: Blessed is our God always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Then the deacon goes to one side of the sanctuary, puts on the sticharion, praying thus:

Deacon: *My soul shall rejoice in the Lord, for He hath clothed me in the garment of salvation, and with the vesture of gladness hath He covered me; He hath placed a crown upon me as on a bridegroom, and He hath adorned me as a bride with comeliness.*

And then kissing the orarion, he places it on the left shoulder. Then putting the epimanikia on the hands, with the right cuff he says:

Deacon: *Thy right hand, O Lord, is glorified in strength; Thy right hand, O Lord, hath shattered enemies, and in the multitude of Thy glory hast Thou ground down the adversaries.*

And with the left, he says:

Deacon: *Thy hands have made me and fashioned me; give me understanding and I will learn Thy commandments.*

Then, going to the prothesis, he prepares the holy things. The holy diskos he places on the left side; the chalice, that is, the holy cup, on the right; and the rest (the spoon and the spear, etc.) with them.

The Vesting of the Priest[4]

Then the priest vests himself thus: taking the sticharion[5] in the left hand, and bowing thrice toward the east, as mentioned before, he signs it with the sign of the Cross, saying:

Priest: Blessed is our God, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

My soul shall rejoice in the Lord, for He hath clothed me in the garment of salvation, and with the vesture of gladness hath He covered me; He hath placed a crown upon me as on a bridegroom, and He hath adorned me as a bride with comeliness.[6]

Then taking the epitrachelion[7] and signing it, he puts it on, saying:

Priest: Blessed is God Who poureth out His grace upon His priests, like unto the oil of myrrh upon the head, which runneth down upon the beard, upon the beard of Aaron, which runneth down to the fringe of his raiment.[8]

Then taking the zone[9] and girding himself he says:

Priest: Blessed is God, Who girded me with power, and hath made my path blameless, Who maketh my feet like the feet of a hart, and setteth me upon high places.[10]

Then the cuffs[11], in the manner described: . Then putting the epimanikia on the hands, with the right cuff he says:

Priest: Thy right hand, O Lord, is glorified in strength; Thy right hand, O Lord, hath shattered enemies, and in the multitude of Thy glory hast Thou ground down the adversaries.

And with the left, he says:

Priest: Thy hands have made me and fashioned me; give me understanding and I will learn Thy commandments.

Then taking the nabedrennik (square)[12] if he has it, and having blessed and kissed it, he says:

Priest: Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O Mighty one, in Thy comeliness and Thy beauty, and bend Thy bow, and proceed prosperously, and be king, because of truth and meekness and righteousness, and Thy right hand shall guide Thee wondrously, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.[13]

Then taking the phelonion[14], and having blessed and kissed it, he says thus:

Priest: Thy priests, O Lord, shall be clothed with righteousness, and Thy saints with rejoicing shall rejoice, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.[15] Amen.

The Washing of the Hands

Then having gone to the prothesis, they wash their hands, saying:

I will wash my hands in innocency and I will compass Thine altar, O Lord, that I may hear the voice of Thy praise and tell of all Thy wondrous works. O Lord, I have loved the beauty of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth. Destroy not my soul with the ungodly, nor my life with men of blood, in whose hands are iniquities; their right hand is full of bribes. But as for me, in mine innocence have I walked; redeem me, O Lord, and have mercy on me. My foot hath stood in uprightness; in the congregations will I bless Thee, O Lord.[16]

The Beginning

Then making three reverences before the table of oblation, each says:

O God, cleanse me a sinner and have mercy on me. *Thrice.*

Priest: Thou hast redeemed us from the curse of the law by Thy precious Blood. Having been nailed to the Cross and pierced with a spear, Thou hast gushed forth immortality upon mankind. O our Savior, glory to Thee.[17]

Deacon: *Bless, Master.*

Priest: Blessed is our God, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Deacon: Amen.

The First Prosphoron

Then the priest takes a prosphoron in his left hand, and in his right hand the holy spear, and making therewith the sign of the Cross thrice over the seal of the prosphoron, he says:

Priest: In remembrance of our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ. *Thrice.*

And immediately he thrusts the spear into the right side of the seal, and cutting he says:

Priest: He was led as a sheep to the slaughter.[18]

And into the left side:

Priest: And as a blameless lamb before his shearer is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth***.***

And into the upper side of the seal:

Priest: In His lowliness His judgment was taken away.

And into the lower side:

Priest: And who shall declare His generation?

And the deacon, gazing reverently at this Mystery, holding his orarion in his hand, says at each of these incisions:

Deacon: *Let us pray to the Lord.*

After the prosphoron has been cut on all four sides he says:

Deacon: *Take away, Master.*

The priest having thrust the holy spear obliquely into the right side of the prosphoron, takes away the holy bread, saying:

Priest: For His life is taken away from the earth.[19]

And the priest having laid it inverted on the holy diskos, the deacon says:

Deacon: *Sacrifice, Master.*

And the priest sacrifices it cruciformly, while saying:

Priest: Sacrificed is the Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world, for the life and salvation of the world.[20]

And the priest turns upward the other side which has the sign of the Cross. and the deacon says:

Deacon: *Pierce, Master.*

And the priest, piercing also in the right side with the spear, says:

Priest: One of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true.[21]

The deacon, taking wine and water, says to the Priest:

Deacon: *Bless, Master, the holy union.*

Priest: Blessed is the union of Thy Holy Things, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

And receiving the blessing upon them, he pours wine together with water into the holy chalice.

The Second Prosphoron

The priest takes a second prosphoron in his hand and says:

Priest: In honor and remembrance of our most blessed Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, through whose intercession do Thou, O Lord, receive this sacrifice upon Thy most heavenly altar.

The priest takes out a particle and places it on the right side of the holy bread, near its center, saying:

Priest: At Thy right hand stood the queen, arrayed in a vesture of inwoven gold, adorned in varied colors.[22]

The Third Prosphoron

Then taking the third prosphoron, he says:

Priest: Of the honorable glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John.

And taking out the first particle, he places it on the left side of the holy bread, making the beginning of the first row, and then he says:

Priest: Of the holy glorious prophets: Moses and Aaron, Elias and Elisseus, David and Jesse; of the holy Three Children, of Daniel the Prophet, and of all the holy prophets.

And taking a particle, he places it below the first, in the proper order, then he says:

Priest: Of the holy glorious and all-praised Apostles Peter and Paul, and of all the other holy apostles.

Priest: Of our fathers among the saints, the holy hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom; Athanasius and Cyril of Alexandria; Nicholas of Myra in Lycia; Michael of Kiev; Peter, Alexius, Jonah, Philip and Hermogenes of Moscow; Nicetas of Novgorod; Leontius of Rostov; and of all the holy hierarchs.

And taking a fourth particle, he places it near the first particle, making the beginning of the second row. He then says:

Priest: Of the holy Apostle, Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen; the holy Great-Martyrs Demetrius, George, Theodore the Tyro, Theodore Stratelates, and of all holy martyrs; and the martyred women: Thecla, Barbara, Cyriaca, Euphemia and Parasceve, Catherine, and of all the holy martyred women.

Taking a fifth particle, he places it below the first which is at the beginning of the second row. Then he says:

Priest: Of our holy and God-bearing fathers: Anthony, Euthymius, Sabbas, Onuphrius, Athanasius of Athos, Anthony and Theodosius of the Caves, Sergius of Radonezh, Barlaam of Hutyn, and of all the holy fathers; and of the holy mothers: Pelagia, Theodosia, Anastasia, Eupraxia, Febronia, Theodula, Euphrosyne, Mary of Egypt, and of all the holy mothers.

Taking out a sixth particle, he places it below the second particle, in completion of the second row. Then he says:

Priest: Of the saints and wonderworkers, the Unmercenaries: Cosmas and Damian, Cyrus and John, Panteleimon and Hermolaus, and of all the holy unmercenaries.

Taking out a seventh Particle he places it at the top, making the beginning of the third row, then says:

Priest: Of the holy and righteous Ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; of Saint*(s) N. (N.)* whose temple it is and whose day it is; of the holy Equals-of-the-Apostles Great Prince Vladimir, and of all the saints, through whose intercession do Thou visit us, O God.

And he places the eight particle below the first, in the proper order. Then he says:

Priest: Of our father among the saints, John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople.

If his liturgy is chanted; but if that of St. Basil the Great be chanted, he is commemorated. Then taking out a ninth particle, he places it at the end of the third row, completing it.

The Fourth Prosphoron

Then taking a fourth prosphoron, he says:

Priest: Remember, O Master, Lover of mankind, our great lord and father, His Holiness ____, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, our Lord the Very Most Reverend ____, Metropolitan of Eastern America and New York, First Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad, our lord the Most Reverend Archbishop or Bishop *N., (whose diocese it is);* the honorable priesthood, the diaconate in Christ and all the priestly order *(if in a monastery: Archimandrite or Abbot N.)* and all our brethren whom, in Thy compassion, Thou hast called into Thy communion, O All-good Master.

And taking out a particle, he places it below the holy bread.

Then he commemorates those that are in authority saying:

Priest: Remember, O Lord, those who are in authority, and in the armed forces.

Then he commemorates those that are living, by name, and at each name he takes out a particle saying:

Priest: Remember, O Lord, *N.* *Then taking out a particle, he places it below the holy bread.*

The Fifth Prosphoron

Then taking a fifth prosphoron, he says:

Priest: In commemoration and for the remission of sins of the most holy patriarchs; of Orthodox and pious kings and pious queens; and of the blessed founders of this holy temple *(if it be a monastery: this holy monastery).*

Then he commemorates the departed, by name: the bishop that ordained him (if he be among the departed), and others, whomsoever he will. At each name he takes out a particle, saying:

Priest: Remember, O Lord, *N.*

Finally, he says:

Priest: And of all our Orthodox fathers and brethren who have departed in the hope of resurrection, life eternal, and communion with Thee, O Lord, Lover of mankind.

And he takes out a particle. Thereafter he says:

Priest: Remember, O Lord, also mine unworthiness, and pardon me every transgression, both voluntary and involuntary.

And he takes out a particle, And taking the sponge, he gathers the particles together on the diskos below the holy bread, so that they be secure, and none of them fall off.

The Censing

Then the deacon, taking the censer and having placed incense therein, says to the Priest:

Deacon: *Bless the censer, Master. Let us pray to the Lord.*

And the priest says the Prayer of the Censer:

Priest: Incense do we offer unto Thee, O Christ our God, as an odor of spiritual fragrance; accepting it upon Thy most heavenly altar, do Thou send down upon us the grace of Thy Most Holy Spirit.[23]

Deacon: *Let us pray to the Lord.*

The priest, having censed the asteriskos, places it over the holy bread, saying:

Priest: And the star came and stood over where the young Child was.[24]

Deacon: *Let us pray to the Lord.*

The priest, having censed the first veil, covers the holy bread and the diskos, saying:

Priest: The Lord is King, He is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength and He hath girt Himself. For He established the world which shall not be shaken. Thy throne is prepared of old; Thou art from everlasting. The rivers have lifted up, O Lord, the rivers have lifted up their voices. The rivers will lift up their waves, at the voices of many waters. Wonderful are the surgings of the sea, wonderful on high is the Lord. Thy testimonies are made very sure. Holiness becometh Thy house, O Lord, unto length of days.[25]

Deacon: *Let us pray to the Lord. Cover, Master.*

And the priest, having censed the second veil, covers the holy chalice, saying:

Priest: Thy virtue hath covered the heavens, O Christ, and the earth is full of Thy praise.[26]

Deacon: *Let us pray to the Lord. Cover, Master.*

Then the priest, having censed the veil, i.e., the aer, covers both the holy diskos and the holy chalice saying:

Priest: Shelter us with the shelter of Thy wings[27], and drive away from us every enemy and adversary. Make our life peaceful, O Lord, have mercy on us, and on Thy world, and save our souls, for thou art good and the Lover of mankind.

Then, taking the censer, the priest censes the prothesis, saying thrice:

Priest: Blessed is Our God Who is thus well pleased, glory to Thee.

And the deacon says each time:

Deacon: Always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Both bow reverently Thrice.

Then taking the censer, the deacon says:

Deacon: For the precious gifts offered, let us pray to the Lord.

Priest: O God, our God, Who didst send forth the Heavenly Bread[28], the food of the whole world, our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, the Savior and Redeemer and Benefactor Who blesseth and sanctifieth us: Do Thou Thyself bless this offering, and accept it upon Thy most heavenly altar. As Thou art good and the Lover of mankind, remember those that offer it, and those for whose sake it was offered; and keep us uncondemned in the ministry of Thy Divine Mysteries. For hallowed and glorified is Thy most honorable and majestic Name, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

The Dismissal

And after this he pronounces the dismissal there, saying:

Priest: Glory to Thee, O Christ God, our hope, Glory to Thee.

Deacon: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen. Lord, have mercy. Father Bless.

Priest: *(if it be Sunday)*May Christ our true God, Who rose from the dead,. *(if not)* May Christ our true God,. through the intercession of His most pure Mother; of our father among the saints, John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople; *(if the Liturgy of Basil the Great*

*be celebrated, he says: Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia;)*and of all the saints, have mercy on us and save us, for He is good and the Lover of mankind.

Deacon: *Amen.*

After the dismissal, the deacon censes the holy offerings. Then he goes and censes the holy Table round about cruciformly, saying secretly:

Deacon: In the grave bodily, but in Hades with Thy soul, as God; in paradise with the thief, and on the throne with the Father and the Spirit wast thou Who fillest all things, O Christ the Inexpressible.[29]

Then the 50th Psalm: Have mercy on me, O God. during which, having censed the sanctuary and the whole temple, he enters again into the holy altar, and having again censed the Holy Table, and the priest, he puts aside the censer in its place, and approaches the priest.

The Beginning of the Liturgy

And standing together before the Holy Table, they bow down thrice, while praying secretly and saying:

O Heavenly King, O Comforter, Spirit of Truth, Who art everywhere present and fillest all things, Treasury of good things and Giver of life: Come and dwell in us, and cleanse us of all impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will among men. *(Twice)*

O Lord, Thou shalt open my lips, and my mouth shall declare Thy praise.

Then the priest kisses the Holy Gospel and the deacon the corner of the Holy Table. After this , the deacon, bowing his head to the priest, and holding his orarion with three fingers of his right hand, says:

Deacon: *It is time to act for the Lord. Master, bless.*

The priest signing him with the sign of the Cross, says:

Priest: Blessed is our God, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Deacon: *Pray for me, master.*

Priest: May the Lord direct thy steps.

Deacon: *Remember me, holy Master.*

Priest: May the Lord God remember thee in His kingdom, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Deacon: *Amen.*

Having bowed, he goes out by the north door, because the royal doors are not opened until the Entry. And standing in the usual place, directly before the holy doors, he bows reverently, thrice, saying secretly:

Deacon: *O Lord, Thou shalt open my lips, and my mouth shall declare Thy praise.*[30]

Immediately the deacon begins the Divine Liturgy with "Bless, Master."

Be it known: If a priest serve without a deacon, the words of the deacon in the Proskomedia, and during the Liturgy before the Gospel, and his response: Bless, Master, and Pierce Master, and: It is time to act, . are not said, but only the Ectenia and the Order of the Prothesis. If many priests concelebrate, in the performance of the Proskomedia only one priest may serve and say what is set forth; but of the rest of the celebrants, none shall say the proskomedia separately.

Reading list[31]

[1] Valid spellings: proskomode, proskimedia.

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http://www.orthodox.net/services/proskomede.rtf

http://www.orthodox.net/services/proskomede.pdf

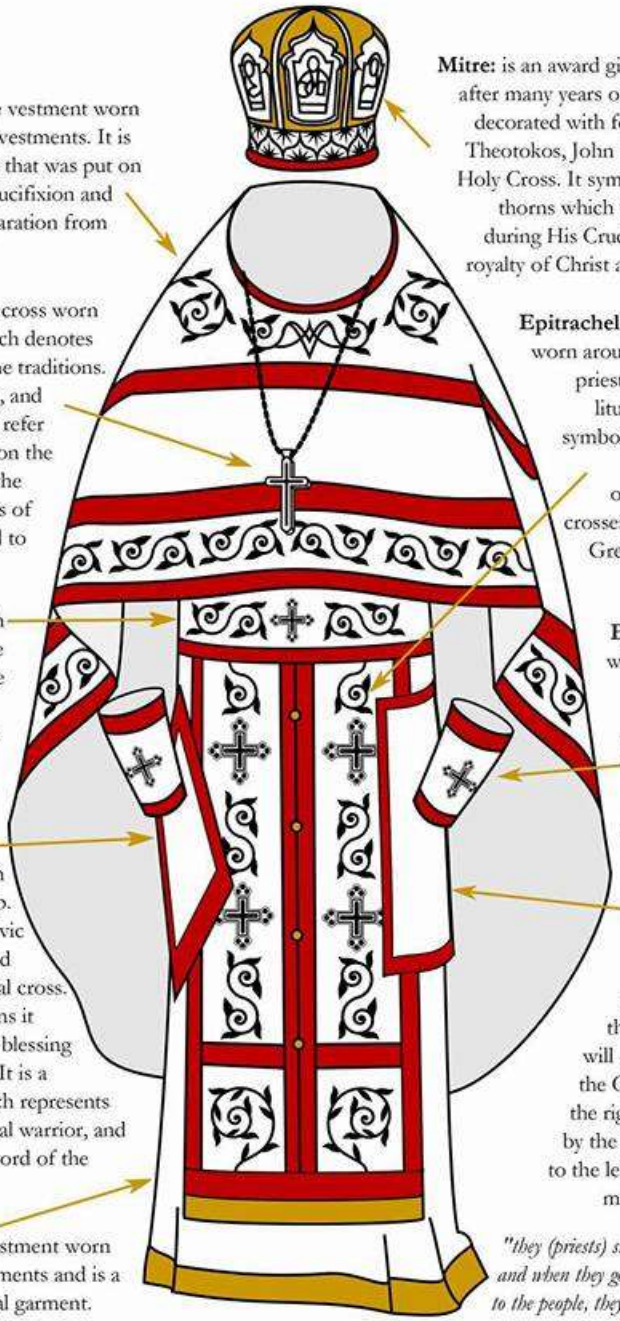
http://www.orthodox.net/services/proskomede.html (may be out of date)

[2] This is the troparion of the Sunday of Orthodoxy

[3] Psalm 5:7b-12, Sept, Boston Psalter

[4] The following diagram is correct, except that the palitsa is not awarded after the Gold Cross, it is awarded after the elevation of a priest to archpriest (married) or abbot/hegoumen (monastic)

Vestments of an Orthodox Priest



Mitre: is an award given to an arch-priest after many years of service. It usually is decorated with four icons, Christ, the Theotokos, John the Baptizer, and the Holy Cross. It symbolizes the crown of thorns which was placed on Christ during His Crucifixion as well as the royalty of Christ as the King of Kings.

Phelonion: the large vestment worn over all of the other vestments. It is symbolic of the robe that was put on Christ during His Crucifixion and also represents a separation from sin and passion.

Pectoral Cross: the cross worn around the neck which denotes priestly status in some traditions. Wooden, silver, gold, and jeweled crosses each refer awards bestowed upon the priest for service to the Church. Some priests of high rank are blessed to wear two crosses.

Epitrachelion: the double stole worn around the neck of every priest or bishop during all liturgical functions. It is symbolic of the grace given to the priest at his ordination. The seven crosses represent the seven Great Sacraments of the Orthodox Church.

Zone: the belt which holds awards and the epitrachelion in place while the priest is fully vested and thus represents a priest's readiness to serve.

Epimanika: or cuffs, which the priest wears on both arms signify that the work the priest does is not through his own authority, but through the strength of Christ.

Palitza: a diamond shaped piece of cloth worn on the right hip. This award in the slavic traditions is conferred after the gold pectoral cross. In byzantine traditions it denotes the wearer's blessing to hear confessions. It is a symbolic sword which represents the priest as a spiritual warrior, and the Gospel as the sword of the Spirit.

Nabedrennik: a rectangular piece of cloth worn on the hip. This is often the first award a priest will receive for service to the Church. It is worn on the right hip until replaced by the palitza and is moved to the left. It shares the same meaning as the Palitza.

Sticharion: is the vestment worn under the other vestments and is a form of the baptismal garment. Altar servers, deacons, priests, and bishops wear sticharion, but the ones worn by the priest and bishop are usually much lighter material.

"they (priests) shall put on linen robes... and when they go out into the outer court to the people, they shall put off their robes in which they minister and they shall lay them up in the chamber of the sanctuary" (Ezek. 44:17)

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[5] The Sticharion represents the Baptismal Garment. It is usually white, but in some traditions, other colors are used.

[6] Isaiah 61:10

[7] The Stole or Epitrachilion represents the dignity of the office of Priest. It is the one essential vestment that a priest must wear for any service. There is the tradition of blessing a piece of cloth to use as an Epitrachilion in emergencies. The fringe at the bottom of the Epitrachilion represents the souls that a priest is caring for.

[8] Psalm 132:2, Sept, Boston Psalter

[9] The Belt or "Zone" represents the wisdom and strength of the office of Priest. It also indicates alertness, and readiness to act. There are references in the scripture to "girding oneself".For example, the instructions for Passover: "And thus shall ye eat it: your loins girded, and your sandals on your feet, and your staves in your hands, and ye shall eat it in haste. It is a passover to the Lord." Exodus 12:11 Brenton. A priest must be alert and active in his mind while serving.

[10] Psalm 17:32-33, Sept, Boston Psalter

[11] The Cuffs or "Epimanikia" represents the reminder that the Priest is tied against sin. They also remind the priest that although he blessed with the right hand, the power is God's and not from any worthiness or ability on his part.

[12] The *nabedrennik (square)*, is, in the Russian church, an award given to a priest after a certain term of service. It is generally the first award given. It is a rectangular piece of cloth, worn on the right side. Some also call it a "sword", because of the psalm verse that is said when it is put on. Among the Greeks and Antiochians, the epigonation sometimes indicates the bishop's blessing for the wearer to preach and hear confessions - it's the sign of a theologically educated priest. In other cases, its given at ordination just as the Russians give a silver cross. The palitsa is the diamond-shaped award comes after the rank of archpriest or abbot (igumen). During the vesting prayers, if a priest has both, he would read the prayer just once, and put on both at once, first the nabredrennik on the left, followed by th palitsa on the right.

[13] Psalm 44:3-4, Sept, Boston Psalter

[14] The "Phelonion" represents the Priest putting on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. There are two main styles. The Russians have a high back that rides above the shoulders, and the Greeks have the phelonion resting upon the shoulders.

[15] Psalm 131:9, Sept, Boston Psalter

[16] Psalm 25:6-12, Sept, Boston Psalter

[17] Troparion for Holy Friday

[18] References for the 1st 4 things the priest says: "And he, because of his affliction, opens not his mouth: he was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is dumb, so he opens not his mouth. (8) In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken away from the earth: because of the iniquities of my people he was led to death." (Isaiah 53:7-8 Brenton)
[19] "The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: (33) In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth." (Acts 8:32-33 KJV) See also Note 8
[20] "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29 KJV)
[21] "Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. (33) But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: (34) But one of the

soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. (35) And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe." (John 19:32-35 KJV)

[22] 44:7 Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity. Wherefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness more than Thy fellows. 44:8 Myrrh and stacte and cassia exhale from Thy garments, from the ivory palaces, 44:9 whereby they have made Thee glad, they the daughters of kings in Thine honour. At Thy right hand stood the queen, arrayed in a vesture of inwoven gold, adorned in varied colours. 44:10 Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear; and forget thine own people and thy father's house.44:11 And the King shall greatly desire thy beauty, for He Himself is thy Lord, and thou shalt worship Him.44:12 And Him shall the daughters of Tyre worship with gifts; the rich among the people shall entreat thy countenance.44:13 All the glory of the daughter of the King is within, with gold-fringed garments is she arrayed, 44:14 adorned in varied colours. The virgins that follow after her shall be brought unto the King, those near her shall be brought unto Thee. (Psalm 44:7-14, Sept, Boston Psalter)

[23] This is the "Prayer of the incense", said the first time the censer is blessed in any service. The priest says the prayer, while making the sign of the cross over the incense, which is wafting out of the censer, held before him.

[24] "When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was." (Matthew 2:9 KJV)

[25] Psalm 92, Sept, Boston Psalter

[26] Thy virtue, O Christ, hath covered the heavens, / for proceeding forth from the Ark of Thy sanctification, /

from Thine undefiled Mother, / Thou hast appeared in the temple of Thy glory as an infant in arms, //
and the whole world hath been filled with Thy praise. (Meeting of the Lord, Ode 4. , Katavasia)

[27] "90:1 He that dwelleth in the help of the Most High shall abide in the shelter of the God of heaven. 90:2 He shall say unto the Lord: Thou art my helper and my refuge. He is my God, and I will hope in Him. 90:3 For He shall deliver thee from the snare of the hunters and from every troubling word. 90:4 With His shoulders will He overshadow thee, and under His wings shalt thou have hope. With a shield will His truth encompass thee; 90:5 thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day, 90:6 Nor for the thing that walketh in darkness, nor for the mishap and demon of noonday." Psalm 90:1-6, Sept, Boston Psalter

"60:4 I will dwell in Thy tabernacle unto the ages, I shall be sheltered in the shelter of Thy wings." Psalm 60:4, Sept, Boston Psalter

[28] "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. (33) For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. (34) Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. (35) And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." (John 6:32-35 KJV)

[29] Troparion from Pascha, 8th tone, sung in Paschal Hours

[30] Psalm 50:15, Sept, Boston Psalter

[31] READING LIST:

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http://www.orthodox.net/services/proskomede.html (may be out of date)

The Office of Oblation (Proskomide) George C. Papademetriou

http://www.goarch.org/ourfaith/ourfaith9561

Volume II – Worship. *The Divine Liturgy*. Prothesis

https://oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/worship/the-divine-liturgy/prothesis

The PROSKOMIDE, or OFFICE of the OBLATION

http://www.saintgeorge.church/OurFaith/Divine%20Liturgy/Divine%20Liturgy-Proskomide.html

Diagram: The Vestments of an Orthodox Priest.

http://www.orthodox.net/images/vestments-of-an-orthodox-priest.jpg